

## CLAIMS

1-16. (canceled)

17. (currently amended) A deployable apparatus for creating a local reduction in wave height, ~~the apparatus having a length dimension and a width dimension, the length dimension being greater than the width dimension and the apparatus being configured so that, in use, the length dimension is generally parallel to the predominant wave direction, the apparatus comprising:~~

at least one a buoyant or semi-buoyant upper surface member having an upper surface and a lower surface and being disposed in use at or near the water surface; **and**

an array of shaped drag inducing elements disposed adjacent the lower surface, wherein the drag inducing elements are collapsible or compressible when not in use; **and**

**a plurality of flexible fluid retaining structures to both maintain shape and correct operation of the upper surface member when in use, and to provide inflating medium to the array of shaped drag inducing elements;**

wherein the leading end of the apparatus remains inclined downwardly with respect to incident waves when in use;

**wherein the apparatus has a length dimension and a width dimension, the length dimension being greater than the width dimension; and**

**wherein the apparatus is configured so that, in use, the length dimension is generally parallel to the predominant wave direction.**

18. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein the upper surface member comprises a plurality of flexibly linked buoyant or semi-buoyant sections.

19. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein the upper surface member comprises a single sheet of flexible buoyant or semi-buoyant material.

20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim [[20]] **17**, wherein the flexible fluid retaining structures comprise a network grid of pipes or tubes.

22. (currently amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim [[20]] 17, wherein fluid is maintained in the flexible structures under pressure.
23. (currently amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim [[20]] 17, further comprising at least one pump for supplying fluid to said flexible fluid retaining structures.
24. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 22, wherein the fluid is water.
25. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein at least one of the drag inducing elements comprise shaped elements formed from a compressible material.
26. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein at least one of the drag inducing elements comprise collapsible drogue anchors.
27. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein at least one of the drag inducing elements are inflatable with an inflating fluid.
28. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein the inflating fluid is water.
29. (currently amended) A deployable apparatus for creating a local reduction in wave height, the apparatus having a length dimension and a width dimension, the length dimension being greater than the width dimension and the apparatus being configured so that, in use, the length dimension is generally parallel to the predominant wave direction, the apparatus comprising:
- at least one a buoyant or semi-buoyant upper surface member having an upper surface and a lower surface and being disposed in use at or near the water surface;
- an array of shaped drag inducing elements disposed adjacent the lower surface, wherein the drag inducing elements have a surface exposed to the water, are collapsible or compressible when not in use, and wherein at least a portion of the surface of at least a portion of the drag inducing elements have structures that act to further increase drag of passing water molecules, the structures selected from the group consisting of bristles and fronds; and
- a plurality of flexible fluid retaining structures disposed thereon, wherein inflating fluid for the inflatable drag inducing elements is supplied from the flexible fluid retaining structures, **and wherein the plurality of flexible fluid retaining structures maintain shape and correct operation of the upper surface member when in use.**

30. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 29, wherein the leading end of the apparatus is inclined downwardly with respect to incident waves when in use.

31. (previously presented) A system for deploying and recovering an apparatus for creating a local reduction in wave height comprising:

an apparatus as claimed in claim 17;

a deployment vessel;

a storage device on the vessel for the apparatus; and

means for paying out and recovering the apparatus.

32. (previously presented) A system as claimed in claim 31, wherein the storage device is a storage reel about which the apparatus is wound when not in use.

33. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein the apparatus is designed for creating a local reduction in wave height when temporarily deployed in an offshore environment.

34. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein the apparatus acts to reduce the wave height by inducing viscous drag between the apparatus and the circulating water molecules as a wave travels along, beneath or around the apparatus.

35. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein at least one of the shaped drag inducing elements having the shape of a prism.

36. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein all of the shaped drag inducing elements have the shape of a prism.